

Appl. No. 10/721,823
Amdt. dated April 13, 2005
Reply to Office Action of January 13, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

Claims 1 – 26 are currently pending in the application, with claims 1, 9, 16 and 24 being independent. Claims 1 – 26 have been rejected. No claims are amended and no new matter has been added to the claims.

Applicants have carefully considered the contents of the Office Action and respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of the subject application in view of the explanations noted below.

Objection to the Drawings

FIGS. 1, 3 and 4 are objected to because the cross sections of the ribs 12, 14 and 16 of FIGS. 3 – 4 are allegedly not the same structure as the ribs of FIG. 1. Although Applicants are uncertain as to the specific nature of the objection to the drawings, it is assumed that the objection is that the ribs 12, 14 and 16 are not consistently shown in the drawings.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection as the ribs 12, 14 and 16 are consistently shown in FIGS. 1, 3 and 4.

In FIG. 1, the connector 10 is shown as having end 32 of the body 20 towards the left side of the page and the other end 35 toward the right side of the page. In FIGS. 3 and 4, the connector 10 is shown reversed approximately 180 degrees such that the end 32 is toward the right side of the page and the other end 35 is toward the left side of the page. The ribs 12, 14 and 16 are shown extending radially outwardly from mid-section 30 in each of FIGS. 1, 3 and 4. Abutment surfaces 76 are offset relative face wall 56, as shown in each of FIGS. 1, 3 and 4. As the ribs 12, 14 and 16 are consistently shown in FIGS. 1, 3 and 4, the objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1 - 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,504,103 to Meyer et al. (the Meyer '103 patent) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,733,343 to Morita et al. (the Morita '343 patent). The Morita '343 patent is cited to modify the Meyer '103 patent with ribs having an abutment surface for abutting with a portion of a mating connector. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, since the Meyer '103 patent

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in view of the Morita '343 patent clearly does not disclose, teach or render obvious the subject matter of rejected claims 1 - 26.

The Meyer '103 patent discloses a latching indicator 40 for a bushing insert 12 that connects to an elbow cable connector 10, as shown in FIG. 1. Latching indicator 40 extends from a semi-conductive shield 52 of a middle portion of the jacket and is offset from the transition shoulder between the middle portion and end portion of the bushing insert, as shown in FIG. 3. Indicator 40 includes tabs 54 that align with an indicator ring 42 of the elbow connector 10 to provide a visual indication of proper latching between the elbow connector 10 and bushing insert 12, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 4. The Meyer '103 patent does not show or suggest a plurality of radial indicator ribs extending from an outer surface of the mid-section having an abutment surface adapted to abut a portion of a mating electrical connector.

The Morita '343 patent is cited for allegedly disclosing ribs 11 and 12 on connectors 1 and 1' having abutment surfaces adapted to abut a portion of mating connectors 21 and 22, as shown in FIG. 5. However, the ribs 11 and 12 of the connectors 1 and 1' correspond to grooves 32 and 33 in the mating connectors 21 and 22 to prevent connector mismatching, as shown in FIGS. 6 and 7. Therefore, rather than abutting the mating connectors 21 and 22, the ribs 11 and 12 are received within the mating connectors to ensure insertion of the proper connector in the proper mating connector. The ribs 11 and 12 of the connectors of the Morita '343 patent merely provide for the correct insertion of the connectors, rather than indicating insertion by abutting the rib with a surface of the mating connector as recited in independent claims 1, 9, 16 and 24. Thus, the deficiencies in the Meyer '103 patent are not cured by the Morita '343 patent such that the Meyer '103 patent in view of the Morita '343 patent does not disclose, teach or suggest the radially extending indicator ribs that abut a portion of a mating electrical connector.

Moreover, the connector of the Meyer '103 patent cannot be modified as suggested by the Examiner. The tabs 54 of the electrical connector 12 of the Meyer '103 patent have a beveled edge 56 that is aligned with an indicator ring 46 on the mating connector 10 when the electrical connector 12 is fully inserted. This visual indicator is achieved because the tabs 54 are circumferentially spaced from the body of the connector 12 to overlie the corresponding alignment marking of the indicator ring 42 of the mating connector 10. Providing the

connector 12 of the Meyer '103 patent with tabs that extend radially from the body of the connector and that are received *internally* in the mating connector would render the connector 12 of the Meyer '103 patent unsuitable for its intended purpose. Therefore, the Morita '343 patent cannot properly be combined with the Meyer '103 patent since to do so would destroy that on which the invention of the Meyer '103 patent is based.

Still furthermore, it is clear that "the mere fact that [prior art] disclosures can be combined does not make the combination obvious unless the art also contains something to suggest the desirability of the combination". In re Imperato, 179 USPQ 730 (CCPA 1973). There is no suggestion in either the Meyer '103 patent or the Morita '343 patent that suggests the desirability of their combination. The Meyer '103 patent provides a visual indication of the connection between two mating connectors by aligning tabs of one connector with an indicator ring on the mating connector. The Morita '343 patent provides ribs on one connector that are aligned with corresponding grooves on a mating connector to ensure that the proper connectors are mated. The Morita '343 patent does not provide any visual indication that the connector has been properly inserted to a correct depth. Therefore, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the Meyer '103 and the Morita '343 patents. Moreover, the Meyer '103 and the Morita '343 patents are not related to solving the same problem, as noted above, which further indicates that combining the Morita '343 patent with the Meyer '103 patent is improper. In re Pye, 355 F.2d 641, 148 USPQ 426 (CCPA 1966).

Therefore, the Meyer '103 patent in view of the Morita '343 patent does not disclose nor render obvious the features of Applicants' invention recited in independent claims 1, 9, 16 and 24. Since the Meyer '103 patent in view of the Morita '343 patent does not disclose, teach, or suggest all of the limitations of independent claims 1, 9, 16 and 24, Applicants submit that claims 1, 9, 16 and 24 are allowable.

Claims 2 – 8, 10 – 15, 17 – 23 and 25 – 26, being dependent upon independent claims 1, 9, 16 and 24, respectively, are also allowable for the above reasons. Moreover, these dependent claims recite additional features further distinguishing them over the cited patents. For example, each abutment surface of the radial ribs forms a step with the face wall of the transition shoulder adapted to receive the portion of the mating electrical connector of claim 2; each of the radial indicator ribs extends outwardly from the mid-section of the body radially beyond all portions of the body of claims 3, 12; the mating electrical connector is a

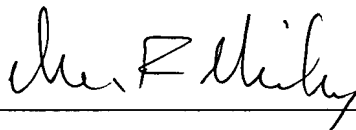
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high voltage cable connector of claims 7, 14; the first electrical connector is a high-voltage bushing insert and the second electrical connector is a high-voltage cable connector of claim 22; and abutting the surface of the cuff of the second electrical connector with abutment surfaces of a plurality of radial indicator ribs, respectively, extending from the outer surface of the mid-section of the first electrical connector and are laterally offset from the transition shoulder of the first electrical connector of claim 25, are not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited patents, particularly within the overall claimed combination.

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In view of the foregoing explanations and comments, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 – 26 are allowable over the cited patents. Prompt and favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Dated: APRIL 13, 2005